

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 14 January 2026

APPLICATION REF. NO:	25/00871/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	13 November 2025
WARD/PARISH:	PARK WEST
LOCATION:	Polam Hall School, Grange Road, Darlington
DESCRIPTION:	Partial demolition and partial retention and refurbishment of existing buildings, the erection of a single storey extension to Elm Grove and a two storey extension to the main building, the erection of temporary modular accommodation for the duration of the demolition and construction period, with associated permanent and temporary external works, including landscaping and construction of MUGA
APPLICANT:	Kier Construction on behalf of the Department for Education

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT PERMISSION SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS (see details below)

Application documents including application forms, submitted plans, supporting technical information, consultations responses and representations received, and other background papers are available on the Darlington Borough Council website via the following link:
<https://publicaccess.darlington.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=T1A838FPIK900>

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

1. The application site comprises the existing Polam Hall School and grounds which extend to approximately 7.8 hectares. The site is bound to the north west by Grange Road (A167) and to the south east by the River Skerne. The site is predominantly surrounded by residential uses with properties to the north, east and west. Land adjacent and to the south comprises South Park with residential properties beyond. Access to the site is via

Grange Road (A167) with a secondary access point at the southern end of Polam Road to the north east of the site.

2. The site is located within the West End Conservation Area and includes the Grade II listed Polam Hall, together with two non-designated heritage assets ('NDHAs') to west of the main Polam Hall School Building. The site also includes a range of modern additions to the school, with the main teaching areas being located within a tightly formed complex of buildings at the northern end of the site which also includes the access and car parking areas, with the school grounds, including sports pitches and playing fields located to the south of the site. Levels fall noticeably across the site from north to south towards the River Skerne.
3. The site, particularly the locations of the existing built form, is situated predominantly in Flood Zone 1, with small pockets of land falling into Flood Zone 2. Areas immediately surrounding, but outside of the site, are in Flood Zones 2 and 3. There is extensive tree coverage on the site, with many trees protected by Tree Preservation Order. Remaining trees are protected by virtue of the site's location within the West End Conservation Area.
4. Planning permission is sought for the redevelopment of Polam Hall school to provide modern, practical teaching spaces. The proposal involves the partial demolition and partial retention and refurbishment of existing buildings, the erection of a single storey extension to Elm Grove (infant/junior school) and the erection of a two-storey extension to the main school building. In addition, the application proposes the erection of temporary modular accommodation for the duration of the demolition and construction period, together with associated permanent and temporary external works, including landscaping and access.
5. In relation to the existing buildings on site, the application proposes the following works:
 - EFAA (Main building – Polam Hall Grade II listed building, Admin with library and music room) – partial demolition, partial refurbishment, and erection of an extension for junior and secondary accommodation
 - EFAB (The Stables – Non-designated heritage asset, Stable Block, Reception) – demolition to facilitate the extension to EFAC
 - EFAC (Elm Grove – Non-designated heritage asset, Primary School – Years 1 – 4) – partial demolition, partial refurbishment, and extension for continued use for primary accommodation.
 - EFAD (Science Building – Science and Art) – demolition
 - EFAE (Liddiard – Dining, Theatre, Sports) – demolition
 - EFAF (Mounsey – Secondary Teaching) – demolition
 - EFAG (Proctor – Changing Rooms and PE Store) – demolition
 - EFAJ (Portacabin – Year 6) – demolition
6. For the avoidance of doubt, no works are proposed to the following non-designated heritage assets on the site:

- EFAH (Grange House)
- EFAI (New House)
- EFAK (Plantation)

7. The proposed new build elements comprise the erection of a single storey extension to Elm Grove (EFAC) to provide appropriate and modern teaching accommodation for primary school pupils, associated staff and storage facilities to support the school's operation.
8. The proposed two-storey extension will be connected to the existing and retained main building (EFAA) to provide teaching accommodation for secondary school pupils together with dining and sport facilities, and associated staff and storage facilities. Externally, a central courtyard/garden is proposed with external dining areas located between the existing listed Polam hall and the proposed two-storey extension.
9. An associated application for listed building consent has been submitted, 25/00872/LBC, and is also on this agenda for consideration.
10. The development will also include enhancements to the site's external areas. Additional pedestrian access points for infant and junior pupils are proposed off Grange Road to prevent conflicts with the secondary school entrance and reduce congestion and disruption within the site, and to improve overall accessibility. Following completion of the proposed development, the Polam Road entrance will be closed off for use as an access point for pupils.
11. Comprehensive landscape improvements are proposed, centred around the proposed courtyard with dedicated spaces for outdoor learning, dining, social interaction, relaxation and play, which will feature seating, greenery, shaded structures and areas, biodiversity features, and sensory features. The courtyard is proposed to prioritise accessibility and inclusivity, with seamless connections to classrooms, dining areas, and playing fields. Enhancements to sports facilities are proposed which include a new, permanent multi-use games area (MUGA) to the east of the main group of existing school buildings which will be floodlit.
12. To remain operational during redevelopment, the proposal includes an on-site, 3-storey modular unit to house temporary accommodation for a period of approximately 3 years. This will provide teaching, learning and play spaces for infant, junior and secondary pupils, along with appropriate spaces for pupils to sit examinations, to ensure continuity of education throughout the redevelopment phases. The temporary modular accommodation is to be located on the existing MUGA to the south east of the group of school buildings, together with associated external works to ensure the safety of pupils during the demolition and construction periods. The works will be fully segregated from pupils, staff, and visitors to the school at all times. The boundary of the construction site will be secured by a suitable 2.4m high fence, with lockable entrance gates. Access to the

construction zone will be via a biometric controlled turnstile gate system, with access authorisations limited.

13. The temporary modular accommodation does not provide sufficient space to fulfil the PE curriculum and a portion of the new, permanent MUGA will be utilised to house a temporary sports hall for the duration of the construction phase. Upon completion of the construction phase, the temporary sports hall will be removed and the new MUGA will revert to its final 3-court configuration.
14. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) together with a Construction Management Plan has been submitted with the application which sets out that the construction phase will be undertaken in 4 phases over a period of approximately 4 years. All phases will access into the site via the existing Grange Road entrances. No construction traffic will access or egress the site along Polam Road. Provisional dates are given for each phase, as follows:
 - Phase 1 (April 2026 – January 2027) – MUGA and temporary accommodation, including construction of temporary sports hall on the site of the new MUGA
 - Phase 2 (January 2027 – August 2027) – Demolition phase
 - Phase 3 (August 2027 – April 2029) – New build phase. It is anticipated that the new building will be ready for occupation by Summer 2029.
 - Phase 4 (April 2029 – March 2030) – Site clearance of temporary accommodation (Phase 4a), car park (Phase 4b), and MUGA and parking (Phase 4c).
15. It is proposed that construction will take place between 08:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 – 13:00 on a Saturday, with no working on Sundays or Banks Holidays, for the duration of the project. Delivery hours will be restricted to avoid the start and end of the school day so as not to add additional congestion to the local area at peak times. On occasion it may be necessary to undertake work outside of these hours, however the CEMP sets out that these hours will be agreed in advance with the Local Planning Authority and communicated to stakeholders as required. These matters will be considered further elsewhere in this report.

Statement of Community Involvement

16. The applicant has undertaken pre-application public consultation in relation to the proposed development and the results of this are set out in a Statement of Community Involvement submitted with the application. The statement sets out that an in-person consultation event was held at Polam hall School on 9th July 2025, with sessions for Councillors and key stakeholders, parents and pupils and the wider public held through the afternoon and evening. The event was publicised by way of a leaflet providing details of a consultation website and how to submit comments. The consultation period and website were live between 1st July and 20th July 2025.
17. A total of 11 no. written comments were received via feedback forms at the event, email and the online feedback form. Of the 11 comments received, three express their support for the proposals, one provided neutral feedback, and the remainder raised

questions or concerns. No comments objecting to the proposed redevelopment and provision of new school facilities were received. A number of suggestions, comments, questions and concerns were also raised as part of the consultation event, both in conversation at the event and in writing. The statement sets out these issues together with the applicant's response. The issues can be summarised as construction and environmental impacts; highways and parking; residential amenity; landscaping; impacts on pupils. Many of these impacts have been addressed in reports prepared to accompany the application and will be considered in the main body of this report.

Environmental Impact Assessment

18. The proposed development falls within Schedule 2, Section 10(b)(i) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (As Amended) as an urban development project of more than 1ha which is not dwellinghouse development. The site is not located within a sensitive area, as defined by the Regulations. Having considered the selection criteria set out in Schedule 3 of the Regulations no significant environmental effects are likely that would warrant the submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The Local Planning Authority has adopted a screening opinion to the effect that the development is not considered to be EIA development.

MAIN PLANNING ISSUES

19. The main issues to be considered are whether or not the proposed development is acceptable in terms of the following matters:

- (a) Principle of Development
- (b) Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets
- (c) Landscape and Visual Amenity
- (d) Residential Amenity
- (e) Access and Highway Safety
- (f) Trees
- (g) Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain
- (h) Flood Risk and Drainage
- (i) Contaminated Land
- (j) Energy and Sustainability
- (k) Sports Facilities

PLANNING POLICIES

20. The following national and local planning policies are relevant to consideration of the application:

Darlington Local Plan (2016 – 2036)

SD1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SD1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

DC1 - Sustainable Design Principles and Climate Change

DC2 – Flood Risk and Water Management
DC3 – Health and Wellbeing
DC4 – Safeguarding Amenity
H3 – Development Limits
ENV1 – Protecting, Enhancing and Promoting Darlington’s Historic Environment
ENV3 – Local Landscape Character
ENV4 – Green and Blue Infrastructure
ENV7 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Development
ENV8 – Assessing a Development’s Impact on Biodiversity
ENV9 – Outdoor Sports Facilities
IN1 – Delivering and Sustainable Transport Network
IN2 – Improving Access and Accessibility
IN3 – Transport Assessments and Travel Plans
IN4 – Parking Provision including Electric Vehicle Charging
IN10 – Supporting the Delivery of Community and Social Infrastructure

National Planning Policy Framework, 2024

RESULTS OF TECHNICAL CONSULTATION

21. No objections in principle have been raised by the Council’s Highway Engineer, Transport Planning Officer, Environmental Health Officer, Ecologist, Arboricultural Officer, or the Lead Local Flood Authority, subject to conditions.
22. Durham County Council Archaeology raises no objection to the application. The Council’s Conservation consultant also raises no objection in principle subject to planning conditions. Historic England has no objection to the proposal on heritage grounds.
23. The Environment Agency has no objection to the application.
24. Sport England raises no objection to the application because it is considered to accord with exception E3 of their Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF, subject to a number of planning conditions.
25. The Gardens Trust and Northumbrian Gardens Trust consider that the existing school has minimal impact on South Park, and it is unlikely that this will increase significantly with the construction of the new buildings, albeit it will assume a more modern overall appearance. They do have some concerns with the rearrangement of the playing pitches and associated flood lighting and the potential for light spill onto the park.

RESULTS OF PUBLICITY AND CONSULTATION

26. The application was publicised by a press advert, and a number of site notices were posted close to boundaries of the application site. In addition, letters were sent to a total of 236 nearby properties. In response to the consultation and publicity exercise a total of ten letters of objection have been received which raise the following issues:

- *Closure of Polam Road entrance and new access to primary school will push more traffic onto Marlborough Drive. Inconsiderate parking during drop off and pick up times already causes obstruction and inconvenience. Displacing access in this way will worsen these issues. Request that the Polam Road entrance be retained*
- *Potential for construction vehicles to block the only entrance/exit to Marlborough Drive. Request that temporary traffic lights or other traffic management be required*
- *Use of MUGA outside of school hours (community use) giving rise to additional traffic, parking pressure, noise and disturbance, adversely affecting residential amenity. Request restriction of out of ours use to protect residential amenity*
- *Proposed development is contrary to various local and national planning policies in this regard*
- *School and local authority are unable to control the appalling and dangerous parking in Polam Road. Unless assurances can be given that traffic will be managed safely will always object to a planning application*
- *Request removal of lighting columns or the complete relocation of the MUGA away from residential properties on Polam Road*
- *Noise impact assessment does not seem to identify the impact the metal fenced sports pitches will have on residential amenity which could be used up until 11pm*
- *How are residents supposed to sleep with 10 metre high floodlights, the noise of people shouting at each other and the constant noise of balls hitting the fences?*
- *Observe geese and foxes on the school fields. Noisy floodlit pitches used for community sports will have a detrimental impact on local wildlife*
- *As residents of Southend Avenue do not regard current noise levels from the school identified in noise report as 'acceptable'. What peace may arise during school holidays will now be lost to construction noise*
- *Roof level Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) with variable speed fans have the potential for unnecessary noise nuisance*
- *Application quotes that school opening times will be extended and that the MUGA use will extend to external groups potentially resulting in noise nuisance into the late evening, early mornings and weekends*
- *Significant traffic problems currently in Southend Avenue and surrounding streets arising from pupils at Polam Hall school and St Augustine's School.*
- *Traffic management measures to manage these issues i.e. extensive signage, speed reduction measures, one way systems etc will further destroy the West End Conservation Area*
- *No indication of where construction workers will park their cars which will lead to an increase in local traffic, parking issues and further local annoyance*
- *Concerns about the safety of the trees along the boundary which understand to be rotten posing a risk to staff and pupils*
- *Concerned about flood risk posed by the MUGA. Where will the water drain to?*
- *Condition of the perimeter fence which is shabby and becoming more unstable by the day*

- *The site section drawing shows the MUGA would have an elevation of 43 metres. The land sloped upwards towards the apartments (Greener Drive/Peverell Walk) so the pitch would be directly opposite upper floor apartments at a similar elevation with no trees or structures in between*
- *The noise assessment models noise levels at 1.5 metres about ground level, accounting for ground absorption, trees and structures. Wouldn't the model predict higher noise levels when accounting for the more direct relationship between the MUGA and upper floor apartments? The impacts on myself and my neighbours may have been underestimated as a result.*
- *The noise assessment says the main noise sources are the school and traffic. As a resident of 10 years can confirm that existing noise levels are very low. Surprised therefore that the model predicts higher existing noise levels around properties on Greener Drive than those recorded at MP2 which is closer to both the school and Grange Road with fewer trees and structures in between.*
- *Main impact of community use of the MUGA would be outside of school hours (after 4pm and on weekends). The report assesses noise impact against average noise levels recorded between 07:00 and 23:00 meaning that noisier parts of the day are included in the average. Does this not skew the assessment?*

PLANNING ISSUES/ANALYSIS

(a) Principle of Development

27. Planning law (S.38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework, 2024, supports the plan-led system providing that planning decisions should be “genuinely plan-led”.
28. Local Plan Policy H3 directs new development to within the development limits of the main urban area to safeguard the character and appearance of the countryside. The application is located within development limits within a central and sustainable location in the main urban area, close to the town centre, and is therefore in accordance with Policy H3 and policy SH1 (Settlement Hierarchy) which places the Darlington Urban Area as the main focus of future development within the Borough.
29. Together with the NPPF, 2024, which sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development (para. 11), Local Plan Policy SD1 states that a positive approach to considering development proposals will be taken that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF. This sets out that the Council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions allowing proposals to be approved where possible, to secure development that improves the social, economic, and environmental conditions of the Borough. As the application outlines, the proposed development has clear benefits that will support the local community, staff and students at the school, and these benefits will contribute to all three dimensions of sustainable development.

30. In line with the NPPF, which also gives great weight to the need to provide enhanced educational facilities, Local Plan Policies DC3 and IN10 are supportive of proposals to support the integration of community facilities and services such as education, and to protect existing and provide new community facilities including education and indoor sports provision in appropriate locations.
31. It must be demonstrated that Sport England's exception can be met and also demonstrate compliance with Policy IN10 and paragraph 104 of the NPPF in terms of long-term protection and enhancement of sports facilities at the site. Sport England comments will be considered in more detail elsewhere in this report.
32. Policy DC3 also requires that a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) be submitted with all major planning applications to explain how health considerations have informed the design of the development. A HIA has been submitted with the application which follows the Council's HIA guidance.
33. The principle of the proposed development in this location is considered to be acceptable, subject to assessment of the proposal against other Local Plan policies relating to matters including the impact the proposal will have on designated and non-designated heritage assets, landscape and visual amenity, residential amenity, highway safety, biodiversity and ecology, contaminated land, flood risk which will be assessed in the following sections of this report.

(b) Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets

34. In assessing the proposed development regard must be had to the statutory duty imposed on the Local Planning Authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of a conservation area. In addition, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also imposes a statutory duty that, when considering whether to grant planning permission for a development which affects a listed building or its setting, the decision maker shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses. If harm is found this gives rise to a strong, but rebuttable, statutory presumption against the grant of planning permission. Any such harm must be given considerable importance and weight by the decision-maker.
35. Part 16 of the NPPF requires clear and convincing justification if development proposals would lead to any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset. Local Plan Policy ENV1 seeks to ensure that development proposals conserve those elements which contribute to the asset's significance, including any contribution made by their setting in a manner appropriate to their significance irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm.

Statement of Significance

36. The application site of Polam Hall School is centred around the main Grade II listed villa, Polam Hall, which dates from 1794. The villa was constructed as a modest three-by-three-bay hall of two storeys, with four rooms on each floor. It was built for Harrington Lee, a Darlington linen draper. In 1818 the site was let to Edward Backhouse (1781 – 1860), and subsequently sold to his brother, Jonathan Backhouse the younger (1779 – 1842), who in the late 1820s employed the architect Ignatius Bonomi to enlarge the villa. These renovations also included the landscaping of substantial pleasure grounds overlooking the River Skerne, during the second quarter of the 19th Century.
37. In the 1850s the site was developed as a Quaker school and has remained in educational use since. It is therefore an evolved site with numerous ad hoc buildings that have been adapted and added as part of the on-going educational use of the site. The original hall has been extended and reordered but still exhibits original features, and its character as an 18th century villa remains evident.
38. The significance of the villa primarily relates to its evidential and historical values as an 18th-century villa, altered and extended in the early 19th century by one of the most influential business men in the north east and work undertaken by a notable architect to form a property of substantial status. The Quaker ownership continues into the later 19th century, and the significance of the hall is enhanced through its use as a Quaker school for ladies, later becoming a free school in the 21st century but maintaining its original ethos and influence.
39. The West End Conservation Area is part of Darlington's inner residential suburbs and is a generally prosperous and attractive part of town. Ranging from high density town houses near to the centre of town, to large, detached villas in substantial grounds, this area makes a significant contribution to Darlington's housing offer and is generally reflective of the growth of the west end of Darlington in the 18th and 19th century period with notable influences of the Quaker Movement.
40. The green space created by the grounds at Polam Hall School and its significant tree cover contribute positively to the conservation area. The Council's Conservation Area Appraisal notes how the ground the Polam Hall School are visible from South Park and partially from Grange Road, contributing positively to the character of the area and identified as a key green space.

Summary of position

41. Alongside the heritage considerations in redeveloping the school, this is a site that is constrained in many respects, including access, the presence of neighbouring residential properties close by, tree preservation orders, land levels and the like. There are notable issues across the site including level changes within the listed building, general fabric deterioration and outdated form and function for modern educational needs. These in combination create operational issues for the school due to multiple and split buildings and collectively all influence the proposals for redevelopment.

42. Fundamentally, the proposals look to continue the use of the site as a school. Adapting the site to meet modern educational needs by rationalising the existing buildings, the creation of new facilities and the demolition of more modern elements and parts of the existing extended listed villa, some of which are early phases of development. The proposed development therefore has the potential to impact both directly and indirectly on a number of heritage assets, as set out below.

Heritage assets considered to be affected

43. The site contains a single Grade II listed building, the original Polam Hall villa, at the core of the school which has had subsequent extensions of varying ages and quality (designated heritage asset). Works of demolition to this building are proposed along with internal reordering and significant extensions proposed to the building, most notably two large wings to the north and east.
44. The site lies within the West End Conservation Area (designated heritage asset). The proposals have the potential to impact on the character and appearance of this asset primarily through the loss of the existing and replacement buildings proposed and particularly the appreciation of the wider site from Grange Road and South Park.
45. South Park, which lies to the south east of the application site, separated by the River Skerne, is a Registered Park and Garden, Grade II (designated heritage asset) and the works proposed to the southern part of the site in particular have the potential to impact on the setting of the parkland.
46. The site includes the 19th Century Elm Grove villa which is identified as a non-designated heritage asset in its own right. Its associated stable block is proposed for demolition, to be replaced with new extension to this building.

Impacts of development

47. The proposal involves new elements of building primarily along Grange Road and to the east of the site through demolition of more ad hoc elements and the creation of larger (greater footprint) school blocks as a large, interconnected school building. The new blocks would connect to the villa (EFAA) via a new glazed link with a central landscaped courtyard created. Works to the listed building include, but are not limited to:
 - Demolition of the existing parts of the extended villa to the north and west
 - Replacement of the existing roof lantern
 - Roof repairs/replacement and repairs to chimneys
 - Large scale replacement of windows
 - Removal of the former Head Teachers office and replacement with a bay window to the principal elevation
 - Internal reordering
 - Removal of the servant's stair
48. Alongside the works to the listed building and the new permanent educational buildings, the following works are also proposed:

- Creation of temporary accommodation on site to allow the school use to remain operational during the construction phase, including the erection of a temporary sports hall
- New Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and reordered car parking to the east of the site
- Existing stable block associated with Elm Grove Villa to be demolished and the building extended
- Rationalised pedestrian accesses from Grange Road allowing buildings to be accessed by individual key stages

49. The application follows extensive pre-application discussions which included the Council's Conservation advisor and Historic England, due to the number and range of issues to be considered. The application is accompanied by a heritage impact assessment which considers the individual and cumulative impacts on works on the heritage assets identified. It is considered that the requirements of paragraph 207 of the NPPF have been met in this regard.

50. The updated submitted design and access statement sets out what options have been considered in respect of the adaptation of existing buildings at the site and the complexities this causes with school use. It sets out the stepped process to the design evolution and what alternative options have been considered to avoid and reduce heritage harm. This body of work examines the constraints within the project site boundary for any future building works that may arise from a redevelopment or upgrade to the school. The existing building stock and teaching spaces are also assessed against current recommended and required standard for teaching spaces on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE) which was part of the feasibility work to consider upgrades to the school.

51. There are clear operational issues and physical constraints presented by the existing buildings in managing the school. For these reasons there will be the need for a balanced judgement to be had in respect of the impacts on heritage assets and the public benefits presented through the adaptation of the current building to meet educational needs.

Direct impact on the listed Polam Hall

52. The continued use of the site as a school is entirely befitting with its historic context and use, with the site originally being a villa in landscaped grounds and latterly evolving to a Quaker school, remaining in educational use since the mid-1850s. There are therefore clear heritage benefits in allowing the long-established use of the site for educational purposes to continue.

53. In respect of heritage matters, the site offers opportunities to reinforce elements of significance, through the removal of less sympathetic alterations such as the head teachers office, but also the potential to adversely impact on these through loss of existing buildings and new build elements. There are large parts of the existing school building proposed for demolition which in their own right hold a degree of interest, and their loss undoubtedly results in some harm to the significance of the listed building.

54. As an ad hoc and evolved school for over 125 years the nature, extent and significance of built fabric varies across the assets and therefore the impacts of the work also varies in terms of its impacts. Fundamentally, the significance of Polam Hall lies in its interest as an 18th century villa with later Victorian and Edwardian elements that collectively contribute to its interest as a Quaker school. This is illustrative of the growing needs of Darlington and the influence that the Quaker Movement had in the town within the Victorian period. The original historic significance and evolved historic interest is continued, as it will remain in educational use.
55. There will be a degree of adverse impact on the listed building as a result of the loss of earlier phases of development, notably the later extensions to the north and west which are illustrative of the adapted and evolved needs of the school through its history, and which hold a degree of both historic and architectural interest in their own right as early phases of extension to the listed villa.
56. The proposal also involves the loss of a historic servants stair, which due to its extremely steep and narrow nature, poses a safety risk for pupils and is not accessible. This is proposed for full removal. Such losses of fabric would be considered less than substantial harm at the mid-level of the spectrum to the listed villa. It is considered that clear and convincing justification for the changes proposed have been presented by the applicants and that alternative options have also been considered.
57. There are also benefits created through the removal of less successful elements including the head mistress's office, which presents an opportunity to better understand the historic form and proportions of the villa and reinterpret the original east façade into the newly created quadrangle. This area of landscaping becomes a key area of circulation and landscape to ground the hall and improve the immediate setting of key elements of the building. These works are considered to bring minor heritage benefits.
58. Landscaping is a key element across the site, the historic parkland setting of the villa and its relationship of borrowed views to South Park and intervisibility are important. The verdant backdrop formed by the school playing fields assist in the transition from park to town.
59. There will be change to the setting of the listed building through the new extensions which are of a large scale, as well as temporary buildings and MUGAs proposed. The impacts of the temporary accommodation will be just that, temporary and reversible. The new MUGAs are separated from the listed villa by proposed blocks of development (as much of the school grounds are currently through later blocks of modern development) and will not have an immediate or appreciable change in setting to the listed villa.
60. Other works are proposed to the building including replacement windows and internal reordering, which are set out in detail in the application plans and documents. It is considered that in principle these elements are acceptable, that appropriate justification

has been provided within the heritage impact assessment and supporting reports including the window and door surveys. This would be subject to the use of suitable materials, finishes and detail being submitted, to be secured by planning condition.

61. Overall, the proposed works are considered to result in less than substantial harm to the Grade II listed Polam Hall villa at the mid-level of the scale of harm. This is due to the loss of earlier phases of work, including the northern and west wing extensions and servants stair. There are benefits in removing less successful elements of the building, but this in itself would not outweigh the resultant harm.

Direct Impacts on West End Conservation Area

62. The proposal brings the opportunity to rationalise the site and provide positive enhancement particularly to the Grange Road side of the school, where there are a number of historic boundary treatments in need of attention.
63. From wider views along Grange Road the groupings of buildings read as an ad hoc arrangement and the proposed design of the new build elements look to use predominant materials such as red brick to create a cohesive development that respects and reinforces the existing site constraints.
64. The simple design approach will contrast with the more decorative architectural styling of neighbouring villas and that of Polam Hall and read as an obvious contrasting modern approach, and a new phase in the site's evolution. The overall design and scale reflects that of the hall and extensions to be retained and is considered to sit comfortably in the site and not compete with neighbouring building styles, helped by the set back within the site and screening that will be retained. It is considered that the development of the scale and nature proposed can be accommodated at the site without an adverse impact on the character, appearance, and significance of the conservation area.
65. There are a number of individual entrances to the building along Grange Road and the boundary walls along this elevation vary in quality and condition. Opportunities exist to improve these areas and also to ensure that any changes to the entrances are appropriate, a planning condition requiring details of the works proposed to be submitted for approval is recommended.
66. Overall, the proposed development is considered to have a negligible impact that would preserve the character of the West End Conservation Area. The proposals do introduce new large blocks of development, in particular along Grange Road, however the impacts are mitigated through detailed design, the set back within the site, the retention of existing mature tree cover and the placement of the new blocks of development roughly in the location of the existing development to be removed.

Direct Impacts on Elm Grove

67. The main appreciation of Elm Grove is from Grange Road. Elm Grove has been subject to extensive modern extensions and the stable block to be demolished, to allow the erection of an extension to Elm Grove, is located to the rear and is an altered structure

which post-dates the villa. Nevertheless the loss of the stable building would result in the full loss of this building and a change to the setting of the villa. This would not however affect the ability to appreciate that Elm Grove is a historic villa set in its own substantial grounds, nor would it affect its appreciation from Grange Road or the positive contribution the villa makes to the wider West End Conservation Area. Overall, the works to the building are considered to be less than substantial harm at the lower end of the spectrum.

Impacts on South Park (Grade II Registered Park and Garden)

68. South Park is a registered park and garden laid out in the 1840-50s as a municipal park. It is a designated asset sitting on the opposite side of the River Skerne to the school site. There is a degree of shared landscaping, and the setting of the hall takes advantage of the views down the landscaped grounds towards the park. There is therefore a degree of collective and shared setting between the assets. The tree lined riverside walkway and parkland trees in the wider grounds of Polam Hall create a degree of screening but there is intervisibility between the two sites, particularly from the north-eastern section of the tree-lined riverside walkway/cycleway in the park.
69. There will be an impact on the setting of the parkland, particularly as a result of the new MUGA enclosures (3m high weld mesh fencing), temporary buildings and associated floodlighting. However, the nature of the development as modern play apparatus in a wider setting and screened by existing tree cover, with suitably designed fencing and lighting, will help to mitigate these impacts. It is not considered that there would be an appreciable change to the landscape setting of the parkland as a result of the works, with the existing more modern school buildings presenting an already evolved site.
70. The resulting impact on the setting of the park as a result of these works is considered to be at the lower end of less than substantial harm as a result of a change to its setting with landscaping retained in between. The Gardens Trust has commented on the application and have raised some concern regarding the impact of lighting from the MUGAs onto South Park, with the potential for this to impact upon the setting of the park. The submitted information demonstrates that light spill beyond the pitches will be limited and as such this is unlikely to adversely impact upon the setting of the park.
71. Historic England has been involved in the proposals from the pre-application stage and have provided detailed comments in response to both the planning and listed building consent applications. Historic England considers the proposal has two main heritage impacts: the direct impacts on the listed Hall through adaptation and demolition of its northern range and the impact of the new school buildings on the setting of the listed building and the character and appearance of the conservation area.
72. Overall, Historic England considers that the loss of the buildings to be demolished would cause moderate harm to the significance of the listed building, equating to 'less than substantial harm'. This is considered further in the associated listed building consent application. In terms of the impact of the proposals on the setting of the listed building, the new school buildings are considered to set up a comparison between old and new

design. The contrast is considered to be softened using references to its surroundings: red brick, similar heights, and the same building line at the south, which are considered respectful to the listed building. Historic England considers the courtyard to be particularly successful in tidying up an already compromised setting of the listed building in a way that gives the Hall a renewed presence. While the proposal does not restore the original setting of the Hall, it does make it a focal point, which is considered to be an improvement on the existing disjointed character of the school and the Hall.

73. In wider conservation area terms, the visual impact is lessened by the set back from the road and the existing tree covered, and where most visible the new building is enlivened by the entrance and windows of the assembly hall. Historic England considers this impact to be neutral. In raising no objection, Historic England considers the proposal strikes a good balance between delivering a new school to modern standards within a historic setting.
74. The application site is located with an Area of High Archaeological Potential, as identified in Appendix C of the Darlington Local Plan. Ordinarily, Policy ENV1 requires development proposals involving ground disturbance within these areas to be accompanied by an archaeological evaluation report. Durham County Council Archaeology section has however confirmed that there are no known archaeological features within the proposed development area. Additionally, the proposed works will fall within areas which have already undergone extensive ground disturbance in the form of levelling and landscaping associated with the development of the school grounds over the years. No archaeological evaluation is required on this occasion, and Durham County Council raise no objection to the application on this basis.
75. The proposals represent continued investment into a site which forms a pivotal educational role historically and currently within Darlington. A range of impacts to the affected heritage assets (designated and non-designated) as a result of the proposed development have been identified. While these impacts are mitigated to a degree by the resulting design and scope of works, together with benefits arising from the ongoing and improved management of the heritage assets and investment into the retained historic fabric, a resultant level of harm to the identified heritage assets will arise.
76. While the level of harm identified to the various assets is considered to be less than substantial harm, albeit ranging from the lower to mid-level in the scale of harm, in accordance with paragraph 215 of the NPPF, less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, where appropriate securing its optimum viable use. Paragraph 216 also requires that in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
77. The applicant has submitted a public benefits case with the application. The proposed redevelopment of Polam Hall School delivers significant public benefits across economic, social, environmental, and heritage factors. The scheme will provide modern, high

quality educational facilities that enhance opportunities for young people and secure the school's long-term future on this historic site. The economic benefits include job creation, investment in Darlington's local economy, and the retention of a skilled workforce through improved educational infrastructure. Social benefits include enhanced educational outcomes, improved wellbeing, strengthened community ties, and broader access to sports and recreational facilities.

78. Environmentally, the proposals will deliver meaningful gains in biodiversity, landscape quality, and sustainable designed, achieving Net Zero Carbon in Operation and enhancing the site's ecological value. In heritage terms, the sensitive refurbishment of Polam Hall, including the targeted removal of unsympathetic 20th century extensions, ensures the long-term stewardship of the Grade II listed building. The removal of these later additions will enhance the architectural integrity and setting of the heritage asset, enabling its continues active and viable use in a manner that respects its significance.
79. Collectively, these benefits are considered to outweigh the less than substantial harm arising from the partial demolition of the listed building together with the impacts identified to other designated and non-designated heritage assets including the West End Conservation Area, the Grade II registered South Park and Garden, and Elm Grove (NDA).
80. Based on the information that has been submitted in support of the application, offers are convinced that the significance of the site and heritage assets in well understood, and that the proposal has been designed to reflect the assets' significance whilst allowing the site's long-standing educational use to continue and evolve. The proposal has been assessed against the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Furthermore, in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 215 and 216 of the NPPF there are sufficient social, economic, environmental and heritage public benefits which would be derived from the proposed development to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of identified heritage assets arising from the proposed development.
81. Subject to a number of detailed planning conditions which cover a range of matters including building recording, materials, windows and door details, boundary treatment etc, and for the reasons outlined above, the proposal is considered to accord with the provision and statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and Policy ENV1 of the Darlington Local Plan.

(c) Landscape and Visual Amenity

82. Local Plan Policy DC1 states that good design is required to create attractive and desirable places where people want to live, work and invest. Of particular relevance to the proposed development Policy DC1(a) requires that an analysis of the constraints and opportunities of the site and the function of development inform the principles of design, including that the proposal has taken account of the need to safeguard or enhance importance views and vistas. The policy further sets out the importance of the layout of the proposal, associated green infrastructure and landscaping to be developed to

complement and enhance the ecological function of the local area and character of the built environment, and that any associated landscaping scheme should be developed to enhance both the natural and built environment, retaining existing features of interest.

83. Local Plan Policy ENV3 requires that the character and local distinctiveness of the urban area, villages and rural area will be protected and improved by amongst other things, and specifically to this application, retaining and improving the special landscape, heritage and ecological qualities of urban parkland at South Park.
84. The design of the proposed development responds sensitively to the site's context and heritage setting, as has been assessed in the previous section of this report. The organisation of the site and positioning of buildings have been carefully considered to deliver a logical and accessible layout that meets the school's operational requirements to provide a high-quality educational environment for both pupils and staff.
85. The proposals involve the replacement of the majority of the existing accommodation with new high-quality buildings. This includes a single-storey extension to EFAC (Elm Grove) and substantial new-build elements that wrap around EFAA (Polam Hall Villa) in an S-shaped form. Architecturally, a contextually appropriate palette of materials is proposed, which includes brickwork, aluminium windows, and curtain walling, selected to complement the existing buildings (EFAA and EFAC) and to reflect the scale and civic nature of the school within its setting. Elevational treatments include textured detailing in key areas such as entrances, assembly spaces, dining halls, and the sports hall, to enhance the visual interest of the building.
86. Policy DC1 also requires good design that reflects the local environment, creating a distinctive sense of place that positively responds to local context. This includes careful attention to the scale, form and height of new development. The policy also emphasises safeguarding important views, enhancing natural surveillance, and integrating energy efficiency measures where feasible.
87. The design of the proposed development has paid careful attention to the scale, form, height, layout, and architectural detailing to ensure harmony with the existing and proposed structures and the surrounding area. The permanent built form will remain two storeys, aligning with the existing building heights, which seeks to ensure the development integrates into the environment. The new development largely follows the footprint of the existing buildings, whilst allowing for a greater distance between the new build and the Grade II listed Polam Hall, which will now be set within an improved landscaped courtyard.
88. The new building elements have been designed to ensure the scale respects the surrounding built environment and heritage assets. The general height of the top of the parapet for the teaching blocks ranges between 8.935m and 9.5m, with some variation for the sports hall and single-storey extensions to EFAC (Elm Grove). This is consistent with the scale of the retained and neighbouring properties.

89. The proposed temporary school will involve the siting of a 3-storey modular building on the lawn terrace, which sits at a lower level to the south east of the main group of school buildings. The temporary school is of a functional and rudimentary appearance which will ensure the continuity of education throughout the redevelopment phases. A temporary sports hall will also be sited on the MUGA for the duration of the construction phase. These elements will be both be removed once the development is complete and operational and any associated visual impacts will therefore be temporary and reversible. The lawn terrace will be reinstated following the removal of the temporary school and the MUGA will revert to its 3-court configuration following the removal of the temporary sports hall.
90. The proposed MUGAs, which include an existing MUGA immediately to the south of the group of school buildings, are to be floodlight, which will involve the erection of a number of 10m high lighting columns on each of the pitches, and the MUGAs enclosed by 3m high weldmesh fences. These features will be seen against the backdrop of the existing school buildings and to the will in wider landscape terms be seen in the context of an existing and established school site and setting. The peripheries of the site to the south and east are reinforced with semi-mature/mature trees which will limit views from these aspects. Information submitted with the application demonstrates that light spill from the proposed floodlighting will not be a significant issue.
91. The existing Polam Hall school site is defined by its mature trees, generous open spaces, and the blend of historic buildings set within an evolving, semi-formal landscape. These features contribute significantly to its identity and to the wider landscape character of the area. The proposed redevelopment builds upon this, and the overarching landscape strategy is intended to create a welcoming, accessible, and inspiring campus environment, promoting the educational and social value of external spaces. The landscape strategy seeks to protect existing mature trees and landscape features by incorporating them into the design, strengthened by biodiversity enhancements which include native planting, wildflower zones and habitat features.
92. Overall, the proposed development has been designed to deliver a high-quality external environment that responds positively and sensitively to the site's key characteristics, enhances biodiversity, strengthens landscape character, and supports wellbeing and education across the site. The design and layout of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on the character and appearance of both the site and the surrounding area and is considered therefore to comply with Darlington Local Plan Policies DC1 and ENV3 in this regard.

(d) Residential Amenity

93. Local Plan Policy DC3 states that all new development that may cause groundwater, surface water, air (including odour), noise or light pollution, either individually or cumulatively, will be required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause unacceptable impacts on the living conditions or all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, the character and appearance of the

surrounding area and the landscape. The policy also requires that a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) be submitted with all major planning applications to explain how health considerations have informed the design of the development. A HIA has been submitted with the application which follows the Council's HIA guidance.

94. Policy DC4 requires that new development should be sited, designed and laid out to protect the amenity of existing users of neighbouring land and buildings and the amenity of the intended users of the new development. New development will be supported where it suitably located and is acceptable in terms of privacy and overlooking; access to sunlight and daylight; and visual dominance and overbearing effects in relating to the form of built development. In terms of the use of land and buildings, including traffic movements and hours of operation, new development will be assessed in terms of noise and disturbance; artificial lighting; vibration; emissions from odour, fumes, smoke, dust, etc; and commercial waste.
95. The application site is located within a predominantly residential area, with residential properties located adjacent to the northern, southern and western boundaries, at Polam Road, Polam Lane, Greener Drive, Peverell Walk and Marlborough Drive respectively. Properties at Southend Avenue are located on the opposite side of Grange Road (A167). This is an existing school site, and pupil numbers are not expected to increase as a result of the proposals. The impact of the proposed development, during the demolition and construction phases and once the development is complete, on the amenity of surrounding residential properties is an important consideration in the assessment of the application.
96. Due to the constrained nature of the site, and the need to provide continuity of education at the site for the duration of the build programme, the development of the site will be undertaken in 4 phases over an approximate 4-year period. Provisional dates are given for each phase, as follows:
 - Phase 1 (April 2026 – January 2027) – MUGA and temporary accommodation, including construction of temporary sports hall on the site of the new MUGA
 - Phase 2 (January 2027 – August 2027) – Demolition phase
 - Phase 3 (August 2027 – April 2029) – New build phase. It is anticipated that the new building will be ready for occupation by Summer 2029.
 - Phase 4 (April 2029 – March 2030) – Site clearance of temporary accommodation (Phase 4a), car park (Phase 4b), and MUGA and parking (Phase 4c).
97. A detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted with the application which sets out how the construction process will be managed on site by the appointed contractors, together with the measures to be put in place to protect the amenities of nearby residential properties and the safety of staff, students and visitors to the site during this time. Traffic impacts associated with the construction period will be considered in the next section of this report.

98. The CEMP identifies various impacts arising from the demolition and construction phases which have the potential to impact upon the amenities of nearby residential properties if not appropriately managed. It is proposed that demolition and construction activities will take place between 08:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 – 13:00 on a Saturday, with no working on Sundays or Banks Holidays, for the duration of the project. Delivery hours will be restricted to avoid the start and end of the school day so as not to add additional congestion to the local area at peak times. All phases will access into the site via the existing Grange Road entrances. No construction traffic will access or egress the site along Polam Road.
99. The CEMP includes measures to limit the omission of dust and dirt during the demolition and construction phases and includes a detailed Dust Management Plan (DMP) to be adhered to during these periods. The DMP identifies nearby sensitive receptors and sets out how impacts will be managed and minimised for these receptors. Details of a complaints procedure is also included within the plan.
100. Piled foundations are to be used for the proposed replacement school buildings. The CEMP sets out measures to limit impacts associated with piling activities together with general demolition and construction activities, including deliveries. This includes employing best practicable means to prevent noise and vibration or disturbance to the school and residents from site activities. Best practice outlined in BS5228 “Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites” will be followed during the planning and implementation of site activities and operations. The CEMP sets out various measures to be followed to limit noise during site operations, which includes the use of acoustic enclosures if required in sensitive areas. All activities will be limited to within the proposed hours of work.
101. Temporary low-level site lighting will be used during the construction period to aid site safety and access. The CEMP sets out that this will be positioned and angled to avoid indirect disturbance to local residents and habitats. Reduced height lighting columns are to be used to avoid unnecessary light spill and the lighting is to be controlled via a timelock to ensure no unnecessary illumination outside of normal working hours.
102. While it is acknowledged that the demolition and construction period will take place over an approximate 4-year period, the measures set out in the CEMP are considered to be acceptable in seeking to manage and mitigate the impact of demolition and construction activities on the amenities of nearby residents during this period. The Council’s Environmental Health Officer has assessed the CEMP and considers it to be acceptable subject to a condition requiring compliance with the measures set within the document and a further condition limiting activities to within the working hours set out.
103. The proposals involve the siting of a 3-storey modular school building on a temporary basis to ensure continuity of education at the site during the build programme. This will be removed upon completion of the development. This will be sited on the existing MUGA to the south east of the existing main school buildings, with a new MUGA created immediately to the east of this area. A temporary PE hall will be erected on part of the

MUGA which will also be removed following completion of the development. The modular school building will be roughly T-shaped and will be approximately 33.05 metres deep at its eastern end, reducing to 22.26 metres at its western end, with an overall length of approximately 70.3 metres. It will be approximately 10.3 metres in height.

104. The modular building is to be sited approximately 110 metres away from the nearest properties to the east on Greener Drive and approximately 90 metres away from the nearest property to the north on Polam Road. There will be a separation distance of approximately 120 metres between the western end of the temporary building at the nearest property at Marlborough Drive. While the proposed modular building is of a considerable size, it has been carefully sited so as to minimise its impact on surrounding neighbouring properties in terms of privacy and outlook.
105. The proposed replacement MUGA is to be sited to the east of the modular school building. In the short term it is to provide replacement hard surfaced PE courts, with a temporary sports hall erected to the eastern end. Upon completion of the development the sports hall will be removed and the MUGA will revert to a 3-court arrangement which will be available for community use, together with the existing 2-court MUGA, outside of school hours.
106. The replacement MUGA is to measure approximately 36.3 metres by 57.4 metres and enclosed by a 3.0 metre high weldmesh fence. The replacement MUGA would be approximately 33.6 metres away from the nearest residential property to the east at Greener Drive, separated by a back lane and mature tree planting along the school boundary. It would be approximately 57.4 metres away from the nearest property to the north at Quaker Lane with intervening buildings, back lane, and some vegetation separating the two.
107. There would be some slight reprofiling of the land upon which the replacement MUGA is to be sited to achieve a near level site, with levels increasing from approximately 43.18m AOD to 43.2m AOD at the northern side and from 43.28m AOD to 43.801m AOD at the southern side. The land would then slope away outside of the MUGA towards the running track to the south. Overall, this level change across the replacement MUGA would be barely discernible outside of the site and would not increase the impact of the MUGA itself on nearby properties.
108. A noise impact assessment has been submitted with the application which considers the impact of the alterations to the outdoor play areas, specifically the MUGAs and their proposed community use on nearby sensitive receptors. The MUGAs are proposed to be used between the hours of 09:00 and 22:00. Based on the proposed hours of use, the noise impact assessment predicts a worst-case noise level of 46dB L_{Aeq} within the gardens on Polam Road. Lower levels are calculated in gardens across the surrounding area, with levels decreasing the farther they are from the source. This is however below the Sport England guidance level of 50dB L_{Aeq, 1hr} which also aligns with the WHO Guidelines for Community Noise.

109. The noise impact assessment has been considered by the Council's Environmental Health Officer who is satisfied with the methodology and conclusions of the assessment. Subject to conditions limiting the use of the pitches to the hours proposed and requiring that the MUGA panels be fitted with anti-vibration mounts it is not considered that the use of the MUGA within the extended hours proposed will adversely impact upon the amenities of nearby sensitive receptors in terms of noise, nuisance and disturbance.
110. The MUGAs will be floodlit prior to being available for community use. The 2-pitch MUGA will be lit by 6 no. 10m high floodlights per pitch and the 3-pitch MUGA with 8 no. 10m high floodlights per pitch. While the submitted information, which includes a Lux assessment, indicates that there will be no unacceptable light spill to nearby residential properties. The lighting would be switched off when the pitches are not in use, to be secured by planning condition, and on this basis, it is not considered that the floodlighting of the pitches would have a harmful impact on the amenities of nearby properties or on the amenity of the wider area.
111. The proposed new buildings have been designed and are of a scale which will maintain appropriate separation distances between the new built form and the existing residential properties to safeguard privacy and outlook. The new buildings will be built roughly on the site of the buildings to be removed, and as such the concentration of school buildings will remain on the upper part of the site closest to Grange Road. There will be some changes to site levels across this part of the site, final details of which will be secured by planning condition, however given that separation distances will be maintained this will not adversely impact upon the amenities of neighbouring residential properties.
112. The noise impact assessment also considers the impact on plant on the new building, including air source heat pumps, and concludes that this will not give rise to any unacceptable noise impacts to nearby sensitive receptors.
113. It is proposed to close existing pedestrian and vehicular access to the school from Polam Road upon completion of the development. The submitted plans show that this access would be for emergency and maintenance access only. The north eastern corner of the site will be laid to car parking once the development is complete. An additional pedestrian access will be created in the Grange Road boundary to serve the primary school at Elm Grove. The main pedestrian and vehicular access to the site off Grange Road will be retained and will continue to serve as the main accesses into the site. It is not considered that these changes to the site will result in any adverse impacts in terms of noise, nuisance and disturbance given that this is an existing and long-established school site. The proposals are intended to rationalise spaces and to provide much improved educational facilities at the site rather than increase pupil numbers.
114. Overall, and subject to a number of planning conditions to manage and mitigate construction impacts, together with conditions limiting operation of and requiring further details of the community use of the proposed MUGAs, it is not considered that the proposal would have an unacceptable impact upon living or working conditions in terms of noise, air quality, dust, light pollution, or visual impact, subject to the imposition of

these conditions. The proposed development would provide an acceptable standard of residential amenity in accordance with Policies DC3 and DC4.

(e) Access and Highway Safety

115. Local Policy DC1 requires that new development proposals provide suitable and safe vehicular access and suitable servicing and parking arrangements in accordance with Policy IN4. Policy IN3 requires the preparation and implementation of Travel Plans, Transport Assessments to promote the use of sustainable transport for journeys to work, training and education. Major developments will be required to engage in the Travel Planning process and produce a Transport Assessment.
116. A Transport Assessment (TA) has been submitted with the application which assesses the highways and transportation impacts of the proposed development. There are no changes proposed to the vehicular access arrangements, with the existing Grange Road access continuing to provide vehicular ingress and egress. Appropriate visibility splays of 2.4m by 90m can continue to be achieved at the site. Within the site, and upon completion of the development, the internal configuration will change with the removal of the existing internal loop arrangement due to the siting of new buildings. Access via Polam Road will remain only as an emergency access point.
117. The proposed development has been designed to maximise pedestrian and cycle connectivity. The existing pedestrian route north of the vehicle ingress will be widened to provide an enhanced pedestrian route directly to the secondary school main entrance. The existing pedestrian access to the south of the vehicle ingress will be widened to provide an enhanced pedestrian and cycle route into the site. A new pedestrian access will be provided in the southwest corner of the site from Grange Road providing a direct access to the primary school (Elm Grove).
118. Car parking for the development once complete will comprise a staff car park (to the east on entry) providing 76 standard parking bays (4 with EV charging), 8 accessible bays (2 with EV charging), and 2 bays for the school minibus. A visitor/overflow car park (to the west on entry) will provide 12 standard bays and 2 accessible bays, providing a total of 100 parking spaces on the site. The spaces will be clearly marked, with relevant road markings and signage provided. They will be appropriately dimensioned with access zones provided to the side of the accessible spaces which are to be positioned close to the main building entrance, with level access provided. There is provision for a total of 64 cycle spaces for staff and students across the site, within three separate areas at the secondary school, primary school and early years building.
119. The applicant has confirmed that the community use of the MUGAs will be take place outside of school hours. During school hours the facilities will be used by the school only. As such it is considered that there will be sufficient on-site parking available to accommodate parking demand arising from the community use of the facilities outside of school hours.

120. The TA concludes that the impact of the proposed development will not result in any increase in traffic on the surrounding highway network. This is based on the school providing education for pupils aged between 4 and 16 (Reception to Year 11) with an existing pupil administration number (PAN) of 915. There are currently 838 children on the school roll, and a total of 139 staff are employed. It is not proposed to increase the PAN as a consequence of the proposed development. The proposed development can be satisfactorily accommodated on the surrounding highway network, without resulting in any severe residual impacts on the free flow of traffic.
121. Swept path analysis has been undertaken and demonstrates that the internal layout of the site is sufficient for the efficient delivery of good and access by service and emergency vehicles. A review of personal injury collision data has been undertaken, and no highway safety concerns have been identified that would be materially affected by the proposed development.
122. A Travel Plan has been submitted with the application which has achieved the necessary accreditation via the Modeshift STARS scheme. Accordingly, the Travel Plan complies with the Council's Travel Plan guidance, and the Transport Planning Officer raises no objection on this basis. In accordance with the guidance the payment of any monitoring or associated fees does not apply to educational Travel Plans.
123. A Construction Traffic and Logistics Plan has been prepared which sets out the strategy for each phase of the development for vehicular access, traffic management, car parking arrangements and site compound, loading and unloading areas, during the demolition and construction phases. The main impacts are likely to arise during this time, and details of how these impacts are to be managed and mitigated for are further expanded upon in the Construction Environmental Management Plan.
124. All phases of the construction period will access the site via the existing Grange Road entrance. No construction traffic will access or egress the site along Polam Road. Access to the site by delivery vehicles will be managed by a staffed gatehouse which will be located in a set back position from the site entrance to allow articulated vehicles to pull off Grange Road into the site. A strict delivery timing schedule will be in place, within the proposed delivery and construction hours, to avoid deliveries sitting on the public highway. Storage of plant and materials, and the unloading of vehicles, will take place within the site. The CEMP sets out that a wheel washing area and road sweepers will be used, as site requirements dictate, to ensure site debris is not tracked onto the public highway. Details of the proposed wheel washing facilities are to be secured by planning condition.
125. The CEMP and phasing plan conditions located therein set out where staff and visitor parking areas are to be provided for the duration of the demolition and construction period until the final parking configuration is available. Site operative and contractor parking will not be accommodated on site during this period and concern has been expressed about the potential for this to place additional burdens on on-street parking within the vicinity of the site, with resultant impacts on residential amenity.

126. An updated Traffic Management and Logistics Plan has been submitted in response to these concerns. This is supported by information setting out estimated traffic movements, specifically relating to staff and operatives vehicle movements for the duration of the project. The Traffic Management and Logistics Plan sets out that agreement for the provision of a total of 25 no. parking spaces for contractors vehicles at the adjacent Sainsbury's supermarket site has been secured for the duration of the project, with the option to secure further spaces if required. The CEMP sets out that this will be monitored during the course of the development.
127. The existing issue of access and parking associated with the dropping off and picking up of children has been raised by a number of objectors to the application. It should be noted however that the proposed development does not seek to increase staff or pupil numbers at the school, retaining the existing PAN of 915 pupils. The proposed development makes appropriate provision for the parking of staff and visitors once the new school buildings are operational, however the general dropping off and picking up of pupils who arrive at school by car will continue to take place outside of the site. The proposed development will not exacerbate this existing situation.
128. Additionally, the school is located in a central and sustainable location, with good links to public transport, and is easily accessible on foot and by cycle. The proposed development makes appropriate provision for pedestrian and cycle access and parking within the site, with new and rationalised pedestrian and cycle access created off Grange Road. The submitted Travel Plan also sets out those measures to be employed to encourage access to the school, by both staff and pupils, by more sustainable forms of travel.
129. Subject to conditions requiring compliance with the CEMP and requiring details of wheel washing facilities, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in a severe impact on the local road networks and the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of Local Plan Policies DC1, IN3 and IN4.

(f) Trees

130. Together with Section 15 of the NPPF, Local Plan Policy ENV7 requires that development proposals appropriately protect existing trees, particularly those of importance to biodiversity, landscape character, and amenity, whilst supporting opportunities for new planting and enhancement of the natural environment. The site includes multiple trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders, alongside numerous other trees which make an important and valuable contribution to the character of the site itself and the wider West End Conservation Area. The remaining trees within the site are afforded statutory protection by virtue of their conservation area location.
131. The proposals necessitate the removal of 4 out of the 131 surveyed trees to facilitate the development. It is also proposed to fell one additional tree as a result of its poor structural condition, but not as a consequence of the proposed development. None of

the trees protected by TPO are to be removed. Of the four trees to be felled, three are Category B trees and one is a Category C tree. The application provides justification for the removal of these trees together with a package of landscape enhancements, which include extensive new tree planting, habitat creation and wider improvements to the site's green infrastructure, which will more than adequately mitigate for the loss of these trees.

132. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement, along with a Tree Survey and Tree Protection Plan, has been submitted with the application. The assessment has been carried out in accordance with BS 5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction'. Trees represent a significant constraint to the proposed development, and the report considers the design proposals and their impact on trees and sets out a detailed Arboricultural Method Statement which recommends a series of protective measures and special construction techniques, together with a timetable for the implementation of these through the development period. The method statement is to be provided to the site manager or contractor to ensure that tree protection is maintained for the duration of the construction period.
133. The Council's Tree Officer has been involved in the proposal from the pre-application stage and raises no objection to the proposed tree removal works or to the proposed tree protection measures as set out in the Arboricultural Method Statement. Given the importance of the trees on the site and the significant contribution they make to the biodiversity, landscape character and amenity of the site and wider area, the proposal makes acceptable provision for the retention, protection and enhancement of the existing trees on the site. Where tree loss is avoidable, it has been kept to a minimum, and is mitigated for through a robust strategy for replacement planting and biodiversity enhancement, meeting the requirements of both section 15 of the NPPF and Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV7.

(g) Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain

134. Local Plan Policies ENV4, ENV7 and ENV8 are of relevance to ecology and biodiversity. Policy ENV4 seeks to protect green and blue infrastructure, and where appropriate, improve and extend it, to provide a quality, safe and accessible network of well connected, multi-functional open spaces for recreation and play and to enhance visual amenity, biodiversity, landscape and productivity. Policy ENV7 states that development will be refused if significant adverse effects to biodiversity or geodiversity, either alone or in combination, cannot in the first instance be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for.
135. Policy ENV8 states that development proposals will be required to provide net gains in biodiversity (prevailing in national policy) and demonstrate achievement of this using the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric...and...where a development proposal cannot avoid significant harm to biodiversity following the consideration of avoidance measures and mitigation, as a last resort, suitable compensatory measures must be incorporated, including the creation of priority habitats, with the first priority being on-site provision.

136. An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), Bat Survey, and Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey have been undertaken and considered by the Council's Ecologist who is satisfied that the surveys have been conducted in accordance with best practice methods and that the results are sound. The submitted reports ensure that impacts to wildlife and habitats are understood and set out appropriate mitigation and compensation measures. Works must be conducted in line with the recommendations set out in the reports to ensure the recommended mitigation and compensation measures are secured. This would be secured by planning condition which also requires the submission of further information to manage impacts associated with bats and nesting birds, together with details of bat roosting and bird nesting features within the proposed development.
137. A Natural England bat European Protected Species Licence will be required for works to those building(s) where a roost has been identified, however this would be dealt with separately to the determination of the planning application. A copy of the licence is however to be provided to the Local Planning Authority prior to any works being undertaken to these building(s).
138. A Lighting Plan and Ecological Technical Note has been submitted in response to the Ecologist's initial comments which confirms that the proposed external lighting associated with the development, principally the MUGAs, will not cause adverse spillage onto adjacent habitats where nocturnal wildlife are most likely to forage. The Ecologist is satisfied with this information subject to the lighting only being used for the hours specified and providing the lighting is installed in accordance with the details provided and, in the locations, as shown. This is to be secured by planning condition.
139. The development will deliver a mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain. A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment has been submitted with the application which confirms that the proposals will deliver onsite gains of 10.7% habitat units and 11.53% hedgerow units. The gains will be secured by a programme of post-development habitat creation and management, to include the creation of neutral grassland through the enhancement of existing areas; the establishment of mixed native scrub to strengthen habitat connectivity across the site; and habitat management strategies to support protected and priority species to enhance the site's long-term ecological value as set out in the draft Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan (HMMP).
140. The Council's Ecologist has considered the submitted information and is satisfied that the BNG assessment and metric have been conducted correctly. Precise details of the proposed BNG works will be included within the Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) in accordance with Section 90A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). The BGP will be submitted to the Council when the discharge of the mandatory BNG planning condition is sought. The Ecologist has further confirmed that a BNG monitoring fee is not required in this instance.
141. It is considered that the proposal would not negatively impact upon any nationally or locally protected sites, subject to the compensation and mitigation measures set out in

the various ecology reports submitted with the application. This would be secured by the various conditions outlined in this section of the report, together with the provision of onsite BNG which would meet the mandatory 10% requirement, to be secured by the nationally imposed Biodiversity Gain Plan condition. On this basis, the proposal is considered to accord with Local Plan Policies ENV4, ENV7 and ENV8.

(h) Flood Risk and Drainage

142. Local Plan Policy DC2 aims to focus new development in areas of low flood risk and expects all new development to be designed to mitigate and adapt to climate change and flood risk. Policy DC3 also sets out that all new development that may cause groundwater or surface water pollution, will be required to incorporate measures to prevent or reduce their pollution so as not to cause unacceptable impacts on the living conditions of all existing and potential future occupants of land and buildings, the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the landscape.
143. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy (DS) has been submitted with the application. The majority of the site is located within Flood Zone 1. This is considered to be an appropriate location for educational developments which are classified as 'More Vulnerable' within the NPPF and PPG, particularly in the context of the development being the redevelopment of an existing school. A smaller portion of the site lies within Flood Zones 2 and 3, adjacent to the River Skerne, however all elements of the proposed development are confined to Flood Zone 1, with no works proposed in Flood Zones 2 and 3 that would materially affect flood risk.
144. The submitted Drainage Strategy sets out the drainage proposals for the permanent design as well as the design of the school during the temporary state. The existing site is currently served by five existing gravity drainage connections. Those in the western portion of the site use a combined sewer system which discharge into the Northumbrian Water combined sewer network, with the eastern portion of the site mostly utilising separate stormwater and foul drainage systems. The foul water drains to the Northumbrian Water foul water network and the stormwater drains and connects to an existing pond positioned to the south west of the application site boundary.
145. There is a network of existing private sewers onsite. As part of the development works, an entirely new surface water drainage system is proposed to replace the existing on site network which will bring the onsite networks up to current design standards resulting in the post-development flood risk associated with private sewers being very low.
146. The FRA identifies that the portion of the site where redevelopment will take place is at very low risk of flooding from all sources, except for the surface water flood risk adjacent to the existing structures and in the northern car park. Surface water flood risk in the development area will be mitigated through the implementation of new levels and drainage strategy for the site.

147. It is not considered that any of the proposed works will increase the risk of flooding to third parties. Improvements to the onsite drainage network through the implementation of a SuDS compliant design will result in a reduction in onsite flood risk and flood risk to third parties as the runoff rate and runoff volume will be reduced due to onsite attenuation achieved through the implementation of SuDS measures as part of the new surface water drainage system when compared to the existing arrangement. The DS sets out that stormwater runoff will be treated to remove pollutants in line with the requirements of best practice.
148. Foul flows from the permanent building will discharge via a gravity connection into the Northumbrian Water adopted foul water sewer and the Northumbrian Water adopted combined sewer networks located adjacent to the site. The proposed development similarly offers betterment in foul drainage terms compared to the existing drainage network as it will eliminate combined flows by directing surface water flows away from the combined sewer network.
149. Interim arrangements will be in place to deal with surface water and foul drainage flows from the temporary school for the duration of its operation. Surface water flows will be directed towards a new soakaway constructed specifically for the temporary school. This will include an overflow from the soakaway that connects to the existing pipe network to deal with any flows exceeding the capacity of the soakaway, should this be required. Foul drainage will be collected and taken by gravity and directed south eastwards towards Polam Lane where it will connect into an existing Northumbrian Water foul sewer. The proposed interim foul and surface water drainage arrangements are considered to be appropriate and proportionate to the short duration the temporary structure will be in place.
150. Overall, it is considered that the potential flood risk from all sources remains low, and that the proposed development will not give rise to any significant negative environmental effects associated with flood risk or drainage. Neither the Environment Agency nor the Lead Local Flood Authority raise an objection to the application. Approval to discharge into Northumbrian Water assets will require separate approval from them following determination of the application. The proposals are therefore considered to comply with the requirements of the NPPF and Local Plan Policies DC2 and DC3.

(i) Contaminated Land

151. Local Plan Policy DC1(h) states that proposals for development on land affected by contamination will be permitted where the applicant can demonstrate that the site is suitable for the proposed use and development will not result in unacceptable risks to human health or the environment.
152. The application has been submitted with both a Phase 1 Preliminary Risk Assessment (Contaminated Land) and a Phase 2 Site Investigation Report which has progressed the contaminated land assessment. The Phase 2 SI report indicates a moderate/low risk of ground gas at the site and a period of ground gas monitoring is on going.

153. Overall, the Environmental Health Officer raises no objection to the proposal subject to the imposition of a number of standard contaminated land planning conditions to secure the implementation of the remediation strategy (Phase 3) and verification and completion report (Phase 4). Subject to these conditions, the proposal is considered to meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy DC1(h).

(j) Energy and Sustainability

154. Local Plan Policies DC1 and SD1 require that new development is designed to reduce carbon emission, increase resilience to climate change and embed energy efficiency within the design from the outset. The proposal includes various sustainability measures which are embedded into the scheme's landscape and building strategy. These include the incorporation of permeable surfaces to improve drainage and reduce surface water runoff, the use of locally sourced materials, passive measures to reduce reliance on mechanical systems and enhance overall energy efficiency. A ground source heat pump (GSHP) will provide low-carbon heating, and extensive photovoltaic (PV) arrays are proposed within the grounds, to provide on-site renewable energy generation, significantly reducing carbon emissions. These measures align with both national and local policy requirements, by prioritising good design to reduce carbon emissions, deliver energy efficiency and build resilience to future climate impacts.
155. Policy DC1 requires that non-residential buildings of 1000 sqm or more should achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' accreditation, or better. An Energy and Sustainability Statement has been prepared and submitted with the application which sets out that while the proposal will be developed to meet the core principles of BREEAM 'Very Good' the Applicant does not intend to formally secure accreditation. Instead the project will comply with the Department for Education's Net Zero Carbon in Operation (NZCiO) requirements, which exceed the sustainability credentials typically required to meet BREEAM 'Very Good'. The statement also confirms that the proposals will follow the energy hierarchy principles to minimise carbon emissions wherever possible.
156. Although it is acknowledged that the proposal will not achieve BREEAM 'Very Good' accreditation, it will meet the alternative requirements set out in the DfE's Net Zero Carbon in Operation and will employ measures to minimise carbon emissions wherever possible as set out in the accompanying Energy and Sustainability Statement. On this basis, the proposal is considered to comply with the requirements of Darlington Local Plan Policy SD1 and with the spirit of Policy DC1(d).

(k) Sports Facilities

157. Local Plan Policy ENV9, in line with Policy ENV4, seeks to protect outdoor sports facilities and where, appropriate, facilities will be improved and extended, to provide a safe and accessible network of quality facilities for outdoor sport. Proposals for the development of new outdoor sports facilities will be permitted where (a) they are located within or

adjacent to the development limit of a settlement; (b) the proposal would not give rise to significant traffic congestion or road safety issues; (c) they can be accessed by walking, cycling and public transport in line with Policy IN2; they protect the amenity of existing users of neighbouring land and buildings in line with Policy DC3; and new buildings or structures are well designed and appropriately integrated into the landscape.

158. Policy IN10(c) offers support for proposals for new and expanded community facilities in accessible locations, providing that the scale of development is appropriate to the area in which it is proposed. In locational terms, priority is given to new proposals according to the settlement hierarchy set out in the plan. Secure community access, outside of core school hours, will be required for any new provision on educational sites.
159. The sports facilities at Polam Hall school are to be enhanced as part of the development proposals. Temporary provision will be made for both indoor and outdoor sport during the development phase with enhanced provision being made available for community use upon completion of the development. The sports facilities would be provided at this centrally and sustainably located site close to the town centre and well served by public transport and easily accessible on foot or by cycle, with appropriate cycle parking facilities at the site. The impacts of the proposal on access and parking, residential and visual amenity have been considered and assessed elsewhere in this report, with no significant impacts identified.
160. Sport England is a statutory consultee on the application as the proposals affect playing field, or land last used as a playing field. They have considered the application in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in particular paragraph 104, and Sport England's Playing Fields Policy. Sport England's policy is to oppose the granting of planning permission for any development that would lead to the loss of such land, unless in the judgement of Sport England the development as a whole meets one or more five specific exceptions.
161. Overall, Sport England raises no objection to the application because it is considered to accord with exception E3 of Sport England's Playing Fields Policy and paragraph 104 of the NPPF. The community use will provide mitigation for the temporary loss of the sport facilities and playing field. Planning conditions, as requested by Sport England, will ensure that the relocated MUGA is constructed to the appropriate Sport England standards, secure the community use of the facilities together with the reinstatement of the playing field following the removal of the temporary works.
162. Subject to these conditions, the proposal is considered to meet the various requirements of Local Plan Policies ENV9, IN2, IN10 (c) and DC3.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

163. In considering this application the Local Planning Authority has complied with Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 which places a statutory duty on public authorities in the exercise of their functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and

advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The proposed development will provide modern, high quality educational facilities that enhance opportunities for children and young people and secure the school's long-term future on this historic site.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

164. The proposed development is for the redevelopment of Polam Hall school on its existing site on Grange Road as part of the DfE's School Rebuilding Programme. The proposals seek to provide modern, fit for purpose educational and sports facilities to replace existing outdated facilities. This would take the form of the partial demolition and partial retention and refurbishment of existing buildings, the erection of a single storey extension to Elm Grove (infant/junior school) and the erection of a two-storey extension to the main school building. In addition, the application proposes the erection of temporary modular accommodation for the duration of the demolition and construction period, together with associated permanent and temporary external works, including landscaping and access. The proposed demolition and construction phase would take place over an approximate 4-year period.
165. The proposed development would result in a degree of harm (less than substantial harm) to various designated and non-designated heritage assets as set out in the report. This requires a balanced judgement to be taken when assessing the level of harm against the public benefits presented. In accordance with the requirements of paragraphs 215 and 216 of the NPPF this has been undertaken, and officers are satisfied that there are sufficient social, economic, environmental and heritage public benefits which would be derived from the proposed development to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of identified heritage assets arising from the proposed development.
166. Subject to a number of detailed planning conditions which cover a range of matters including building recording, materials, windows and door details, boundary treatment etc, and for the reasons outlined above, the proposal is considered to accord with the provision and statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF and Policy ENV1 of the Darlington Local Plan.
167. Consideration has also been given to the principle of development, together with impacts on landscape and visual amenity, residential amenity, land contamination, access and highway safety, ecology and biodiversity net gain, trees, flooding and drainage. Subject to appropriate planning conditions, the impacts are considered to be acceptable and can be appropriately mitigated for, acknowledging that some impacts would be temporary for the duration of the construction period only.
168. Overall, it is considered that the proposed development accords with the relevant policies of the Darlington Local Plan (2016 – 2036) and the relevant sections of the NPPF. It is therefore, recommended:

THAT PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS

Time limit

1. A3 (standard 3-year time limit)

Temporary works

2. The modular classrooms and temporary sports hall hereby permitted shall be retained for the duration of the demolition and construction period only and shall be removed from the site once the new school buildings and sports facilities are operational, unless the Local Planning Authority has first given its approval in writing for the retention of these buildings for an extended period. Thereafter the site of these temporary structures shall be reinstated in accordance with a scheme which shall first be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON – The type of buildings proposed are not ones that the Local Planning Authority would ordinarily consider to be appropriate in this location, other than for a limited period and in view of the particular circumstances of this application, in view of their appearance and construction.

Approved plans

3. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as detailed below:
 - (a) Site location plan, drawing number SRP114-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0001-P03
 - (b) Modular accommodation ground floor, drawing number 39790-PML-B1-00-DR-A-0001 Rev P11
 - (c) Modular accommodation reception, drawing number 39790-PML-B1-00-DR-A-0002 Rev P2
 - (d) Modular accommodation first floor, drawing number 39790-PML-B1-01-DR-A-0001 Rev P8
 - (e) Modular accommodation second floor, drawing number 39790-PML-B1-02-DR-A-0001 Rev P7
 - (f) Modular accommodation roof layout, drawing number 39790-PML-B1-XX-DR-A-0003 Rev P1
 - (g) Modular accommodation typical sections, drawing number 39790-PML-B1-XX-DR-A-0030 Rev C2
 - (h) Modular accommodation elevations, drawing number 39790-PML-B1-XX-DR-A-0060-Rev P8
 - (i) Vehicle circulation strategy, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0005 P07
 - (j) Pedestrian circulation strategy, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0006 P07
 - (k) Planting strategy, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0201 P03
 - (l) Site sections, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0401 P03

- (m) Temporary whole site plan, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0901-P04
- (n) EFAA Demolition Level 0, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-00-D-A-0411-S2-P3
- (o) EFAA Demolition Level 1, drawing number SRP1142-YD-01-01-D-A-0412-S2-P3
- (p) EFAA Floor Plan Level 2, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-02-D-A-3074-S2-P3
- (q) EFAA Demolition Basement, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-B1-D-A-0410-S2-P1
- (r) EFAC Demolition Level 0, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-03-00-D-A-0414-S2-P1
- (s) EFAC Demolition Level 1, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-03-0-D-A-0415-S2-P1
- (t) EFAA Scope of works Level 0, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-00-D-A-3621-S3-P4
- (u) EFAC Floor plan Level 2, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-03-02-D-A-3063-S2-P3
- (v) Whole site plan, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0003-P16
- (w) Planting strategy, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0201-P03
- (x) Illustrative masterplan, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0801-P08
- (y) GA Floor plan EFAA Level 0, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-00-D-A-3071-S2-P3
- (z) Scope of works EFAA Level 0, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-00-D-A-3621-P4
- (aa) GA Floor plan EFAA Level 1, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-01-D-A-3072 P2
- (bb) Scope of works EFAA Level 1, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-01-D-A-3622-P4
- (cc) Scope of works EFAA Level 2, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-01-D-A-3623-P3
- (dd) GA Floor Plan EFAA Level 2, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-02-D-A-3074-P2
- (ee) GA Floor Plan EFAA Level B1, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-B1-D-A-3070-P3
- (ff) Scope of works EFAA Level B1, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-B1-D-A-3620-P4
- (gg) GA EFAA Roof Plan, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-R3-D-A-3073-P2
- (hh) Planning GA elevations, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-ZZ-D-A-3610-P4
- (ii) Scope of works EFAA elevations, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-ZZ-D-A-3630-P4
- (jj) GA Floor Plan EFAC Level 0, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-03-00-D-A-3061-P3
- (kk) GA Floor Plan EFAC Level 1, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-03-01-D-A-3062-P3
- (ll) GA Floor Plan EFAC Level 2, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-03-02-D-A-3063-P3
- (mm) GA Floor Plan EFAC Basement, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-03-B2-D-A-3060-P3
- (nn) GA EFAC Roof Plan, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-03-R2-D-A-3064-P2
- (oo) GA Elevations EFAC, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-03-ZZ-D-A-3611-P4
- (pp) GA Floor Plan New Build Level 0, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-20-00-D-A-3080-P2
- (qq) GA Floor Plan New Build Level 1, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-20-01-D-A-3081-P2
- (rr) GA New Build Roof Plan, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-20-R2-D-A-3082-P2
- (ss) GA Elevations New Build Sheet 1 of 2, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-20-ZZ-D-A-3612-P4
- (tt) GA Elevations New Build Sheet 2 of 2, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-20-ZZ-D-A-3613-P4
- (uu) External lighting layout 1 of 2, drawing number SRP1142-TES-00-XX-D-E-9001 Rev PO4
- (vv) External lighting layout 2 of 2, drawing number SRP1142-TES-00-D-E-9011 Rev P04

(ww) PV Canopy Design, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0610-P01
(xx)PV Canopy Design, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0611-P01

REASON – To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the planning permission.

Materials

4. Prior to the commencement of any works to the listed Polam Hall and the demolition of the stable block at Elm Grove Villa, a written scheme of investigation demonstrating how the applicant shall record the building/structure to an appropriate standard shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the building recording shall be undertaken in accordance with the written scheme of investigation as approved and the resulting building recording shall be submitted to an approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of work commencing, or other timescale which may be otherwise be agreed in writing. Within 3 months of the Historic Building Recording being approved by the Local Planning Authority it shall be submitted to the relevant Record Office.

REASON – To record and advance understanding of the significance of the elements of the heritage assets to be lost in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

5. All repair works to the retained historic building fabric must match that of the original work in terms of materials, method of construction and finished appearance.

REASON - In order to preserve the historic fabric of the building in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

6. Prior to any external repointing or repair works to the listed Polam Hall villa taking place, a specification for the mortar together with a method statement for the carrying out of the works, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. All repair works shall be undertaken and maintained in accordance with the approved details.

REASON – To ensure that the proposed works are appropriate in order to preserve the historic fabric of the listed building in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

7. Prior to any of the following roof works being carried out:
 - (a) Roof repairs
 - (b) New rainwater goods
 - (c) Roof replacements (to retained buildings)
 - (d) Replacement of the existing roof lantern (as shown on GA EFAA Roof Plan, drawing number SRP1142-RYD-01-R3-D-A-3073-P2)

A detailed method statement setting out the intended works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before that part of the development is commenced. Thereafter the development shall be completed in accordance with the approved details and thereafter be so maintained.

REASON – To safeguard and enhance the special character of the listed building in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

8. All roof repairs to retained buildings shall be undertaken with matching roof tiles or slates, or alternatively prior to the installation of any replacement tiles or slates, samples shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter any roof repairs shall be carried out in accordance with the details as approved and be so maintained.

REASON – In order to preserve the historic fabric of the building in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

9. Prior to the commencement of that part of the development, a method statement and proposed scheme details of the following shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - (a) Proposed new floor finishes and retained historic floor finishes within the ground floor of the listed Polam Hall villa
 - (b) Cornice plaster repairs including works of making good to ceilings
 - (c) External stonework repairs
 - (d) Retrained internal doors/woodwork repairs including any redecoration

Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the details as approved and be so maintained.

REASON – In order to preserve the historic fabric of the building in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

10. Prior to the commencement of any work relating to the removal of the existing head teachers office, a method statement detailing how the removal works are to be undertaken and making good the villa, including details of the new window to be installed following removal, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the works shall be carried out in accordance with the details as approved and any remedial works including the installation of the new window shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

REASON – In order to preserve the character and appearance of the building in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

11. Prior to the commencement of any work to the boundaries of the school site along Grange Road, a scheme of proposed works to the boundaries to include details of works for the formation/improvement of existing pedestrian access points, repointing works and any other remedial or repair works to the boundaries, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the works shall be carried out in accordance with the details as approved and be so maintained.

REASON – In order to preserve the character and appearance of the building in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

12. Prior to the construction of any works above damp proof course level of any new building/extended building details of the following, including samples if requested, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - (a) Wall and roof materials
 - (b) Details of new windows and doors
 - (c) Details of hard landscaping materials

Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the details as approved and be so maintained for the lifetime of the development.

REASON - In order to ensure that the materials used preserve the character and appearance of the host building and wider locality in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

13. Prior to the commencement of any works relating to the new glazed link to be erected between the new building and the Grade II listed Polam Hall villa, elevations and section details of the link at an appropriate scale (1:20 or as agreed) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted plans shall show the following:
 - (a) Details of openings
 - (b) Depth of reveals
 - (c) Details of frames
 - (d) Details of meeting rails
 - (e) Details of glazing bar and glazing cavity
 - (f) Details of the colour finish

Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the details as approved and be so maintained for the lifetime of the development.

REASON – To ensure that the character, appearance, and integrity of the listed building is not prejudiced thereby preserving the special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the NPPF, and Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

14. Details of any new ancillary works to the Grade II listed Polam Hall including any extraction or ventilation equipment, CCTV, alarm and utility meter boxes, shall be

submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the details as approved and be so maintained for the lifetime of the development.

REASON – To ensure a satisfactory external appearance to the building in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

15. Should any hidden historic features be revealed during works to the Grade II listed Polam Hall, they should be retained in situ. Works shall be halted in the relevant area of the building, and the Local Planning Authority should be notified immediately for inspection. Works shall not recommence in that area without the agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON – To safeguard the special character of the listed building in accordance with Darlington Local Plan Policy ENV1.

Contaminated land

16. Prior to the commencement of the development or at a time agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority a Phase 3 Remediation and Verification Strategy shall be prepared by a “suitably competent person(s)” to address all human health and environmental risks associated with contamination identified in the Phase 2 Site Investigation and Risk Assessment. The Remediation and Verification Strategy which shall include an options appraisal and ensure that the site is suitable for its new use, and no unacceptable risks remain, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority unless the Local Planning Authority dispenses with the requirement specifically and in writing.

REASON – The site may be contaminated as a result of past or current uses and/or is within 250 metres of a site which has been landfilled. To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future uses of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out without unacceptable risks to receptors, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

17. Any contamination not considered in the Phase 3 Remediation and Verification Strategy but identified during subsequent construction/remediation works shall be reported in writing within a reasonable timescale to the Local Planning Authority. The contamination shall be subject to further risk assessment and remediation proposals agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and the development completed in accordance with any further agreed amended specification of works.

REASON – The site may be contaminated as a result of past or current uses and/or is within 250 metres of a site which has been landfilled. To ensure that risks from land

contamination to the future uses of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out without unacceptable risks to receptors, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

18. The Phase 3 Remediation and Verification works shall be conducted, supervised and documented by a “suitably competent person(s)” and in accordance with the agreed Phase 3 Remediation and Verification Strategy. No alterations to the agreed Remediation and Verification Strategy or associated works shall be carried out without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

A Phase 4 Verification and Completion Report shall be compiled and reported by a “suitably competent person(s)”, documenting the purpose, objectives, investigation and risk assessment findings, remediation methodologies, validation results and post remediation monitoring carried out to demonstrate the completeness and effectiveness of all agreed remediation works conducted. The Phase 4 Verification and Completion Report shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority within 2 months of the completion of the development or at a time agreed unless the Local Planning Authority dispenses with the requirements specifically and in writing.

The development site or agreed phase of development site, shall not be occupied until all of the approved investigation, risk assessment, remediation and verification requirements relevant to the site (or part thereof) have been completed, reported and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON – The site may be contaminated as a result of past or current uses and/or is within 250 metres of a site which has been landfilled. To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future uses of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out without unacceptable risks to receptors, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Amenity

19. No construction activities, including site clearance and demolition activities, as well as deliveries to and from the site, shall take place outside the hours of 08:00 – 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 – 13:00 on a Saturday, with no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON – In the interest of residential amenity

20. The construction phase of the development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained within the Polam Hall School Construction Environmental Management Plan prepared by Kier Construction Ltd submitted with the application.

REASON – In the interests of residential amenity and highway safety.

21. The multi-use games areas hereby permitted shall not be used and the associated floodlighting shall be switched off outside of the hours of operation to be agreed as part of the Community Use Scheme to be submitted under condition 32.

REASON – In the interest of residential amenity.

22. Notwithstanding any details submitted as part of the application, prior to the installation of any floodlighting associated with the MUGAs hereby permitted full details of the floodlights shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the floodlights shall be installed in accordance with the details as approved and thereafter be so maintained for the lifetime of the development.

REASON – In the interests of visual and residential amenity.

23. Prior to the construction of the temporary sports hall hereby permitted full details of the sports hall shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the temporary sports hall shall be installed in accordance with the details as approved.

REASON – In the interests of visual and residential amenity.

24. Anti-vibration mounts shall be fitted to the panels within the multi-use games areas (MUGAs) hereby approved prior to the MUGAs first being brought into operation and shall be maintained for the lifetime of the development.

REASON – In the interest of residential amenity.

25. Notwithstanding the submitted details and prior to the commencement of development, details of the existing and proposed site levels, to include finished flood levels of the buildings to be erected, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out in accordance with the details as approved.

REASON – In the interests of visual and residential amenity.

Ecology

26. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations set out in the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), Bat Survey, and Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey undertaken by OS Ecology. In particular, the following information shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:
 - (a) A Precautionary Method Statement for works to Building 1;

- (b) A plan showing the location and details of bat roosting features to be installed/enhanced;
- (c) A plan showing the type, number, and location of artificial nesting features. Any features on buildings should be integrated features where possible, and suitable for a range of bird species including swifts, sparrows, and starlings.
- (d) Any relevant ecology updates in applicable.

REASON - To comply with Policy ENV7 of the Darlington Local Plan.

27. External lighting associated with the development hereby approved shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the External Lighting Layout plans, drawing numbers SRP1142-TES-00-XX-D-E-9001-Rev P04 and SRP1142-TES-00-XX-D-E-9011-Rev P04, and within the OS Ecology Ecological Technical Note – Lighting Assessment dated November 2025 and maintained thereafter in accordance with these details for the lifetime of the development. No further external lighting shall be installed without the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority.

REASON – To ensure that external lighting does not adversely impact upon nearby foraging habitats of nocturnal wildlife and to comply with Policy ENV7 of the Darlington Local Plan.

28. The soft landscaping works shown on the submitted Planting Strategy, drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0201-P03, shall be fully implemented concurrently with the carrying out of the development, or within such extended period which may be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of 5 years from the date of planting of any tree or shrub in connection with the landscaping works required, that tree or shrub or any tree or shrub planted in replacement of it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed, seriously damaged or dies, another tree or shrub of the same size and species to that originally planted shall be planted in the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.

REASON – In the interest of the visual amenity of the area

29. The development hereby permitted shall be constructed to the DfE School Output Specification standard or better as set out in the Energy and Sustainability Statement 'Polam Hall School PA193 Rev. P01' dated July 2025 submitted with the application.

REASON – To comply with the requirements of Local Plan Policy DC1

Tree Protection

30. No construction work, including site clearance and demolition work, shall take place, nor shall any site cabins, materials or machinery be brought onto site until all trees to be retained are protected in accordance with the details contained within the Elliott Consultancy Ltd Arboricultural Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Arboricultural

Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan Ref. ARB/AE/3660, dated November 2025. The construction phase of the development shall be carried out in accordance with the actions and tree protection measures set out in Sections 5, 6 and 7 of the report, and the approved tree protection measures shall remain in situ for the duration of the construction period of the development in accordance with the details outlined in the report.

REASON – In the interests of the visual amenity of the area

Flood Risk

31. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted 'Polam Hall School - SRP1142 Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk Assessment' and the mitigation measures specified therein.

REASON - To reduce the risk of flooding elsewhere and to comply with Darlington Local Plan Policies DC2 and DC3.

Sport England

32. Prior to the development hereby approved being brought into use, a Community Use Scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, after consultation with Sport England. The Scheme shall include details of pricing policy, hours of use, access by non-school users/non-members, management responsibilities and include a mechanism for review. The approved Scheme shall be implemented upon commencement of use of the development.

REASON – To secure well managed safe community access to the sports facility, to ensure sufficient benefit to the development of sport and to accord with the requirements of Darlington Local Plan Policy IN10(C).

33. The relocated multi use games area hereby permitted shall not be constructed other than substantially in accordance with Sport England/National Governing Body Technical Design Guidance Notes: Artificial Surfaces for Outdoor Sport guide.

REASON - To ensure the development is fit for purpose and sustainable and to accord with the requirements of Darlington Local Plan Policy IN10(C).

34. Following completion of the temporary works as shown in Phase 1 temporary construction area on the Access and Phasing Document within three months of the completion of the temporary works, the playing field land shall be reinstated to a playing field of a quality at least equivalent to the quality of the playing field immediately before the temporary works commenced.

REASON – To ensure the site is restored to a condition fit for purpose and to accord with the requirements of Darlington Local Plan Policies ENV4, ENV9 and IN10(C).

35. Following completion of the temporary parking on the existing Multi Use Games Area, as shown on Phase 4B in the Access and Phasing Document within three months of the completion of the temporary car parking, the Multi Use Games Area shall be reinstated to a quality at least equivalent to the quality of the Multi Use Games Area immediately before the temporary works commenced.

REASON – To ensure the site is restored to a condition fit for purpose and to accord with the requirements of Darlington Local Plan Policies ENV4, ENV9 and IN10(C).

Highways

36. The cycle parking and electrical vehicle charging points as shown on drawing number SRP1142-ONE-ZZ-ZZ-D-L-0003 Rev. P16 'Whole site plan' shall be in place and shall be operational prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved and shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details for the lifetime of the development.

REASON – To ensure provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and cycle parking in accordance with the requirements of Local Plan Policy IN4.

37. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, details of a scheme for wheel washing shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the wheel washing facilities as approved shall be in place and available for use prior to the commencement of the demolition and construction phases of the development and be so maintained for the duration of these phases of the development.

REASON – In the interest of highway safety

INFORMATIVES

Biodiversity Gain Plan Condition

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition ("the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless:

- (a) A Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority; and
- (b) The planning authority has approved the plan

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission is Darlington Borough Council. There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain

condition does not always apply. These are listed in paragraph 17 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed are considered to apply.

Sport England

A model Community Use Scheme is available on the Sport England website

www.sportengland.org

It is recommended that a restoration scheme for playing field land is undertaken by a specialist turf consultant. The applicant should aim to ensure that any new or replacement playing field is fit for its intended purpose and should have regard to Sport England's technical Design Guidance Note entitled "Natural Turf for Sport" (2011) and relevant design guidance of the National Governing Bodies for Sport e.g. performance quality standards produced by the relevant pitch tam sports, for example the Football Association.

Ecology

A copy of the Natural England bat European Protected Species Licence granted in respect of works to building 4 shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority prior to any works being undertaken to this building.